

## Sample Letter 1: Discussing a Problem

Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Month, Day, Year

Name of Principal  
Name of School  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Principal's name),

In this paragraph say who you are, give your child's full name, and his or her current class placement. Say something positive about your child's situation here, before you state your reason for writing.

BRIEFLY, explain why you are writing. Give *relevant* history and facts that support your concerns. (For example, your 3rd grader is struggling in school and you want to ask for help. You might say that your child's school work has been getting worse throughout the year. That fact is relevant. Talking about something from your child's infancy probably isn't.)

In this paragraph state what you would like to have happen or what you would like to see changed. You may BRIEFLY say what you would *not* like, or what has been tried and not worked. However, spend most of this paragraph saying what you want.

Say what type of response you would prefer. For instance, do you need to meet with someone, do you want a return letter, or a phone call?

Finally, give your daytime telephone number and state that you look forward to hearing from the person soon or give a date ("Please respond by the 15th"). End the letter with "Thank you for your attention to this matter."

Sincerely,  
Your name

cc: your child's teacher  
other staff

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Note: The "cc:" at the bottom of the letter means you are sending a copy of your letter to the people listed after the cc. If you write to the Director of Special Education about a problem at your child's school, you should copy the principal. If you write to the principal about a problem, you should copy your child's teacher or other staff involved with your child. This follows the "chain of command." It also lets people involved know your concerns and that you are taking steps to resolve these concerns.

Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.

## **Writing to Discuss a Problem**

### ***When might I want to write to my child's school?***

Sometimes your child may have a particular problem at school. You may have talked to your child's teacher about this concern. The two of you may have written notes back and forth or talked on the phone. If it seems like nothing is happening to resolve your concern, then you may want to write a formal letter. Perhaps the informal communication hasn't been as clear as you think. Maybe you feel that the seriousness of your concern isn't fully understood. By writing a letter, the school will learn that you consider the matter to be an important one that needs to be addressed. You can write about any concern - an IEP issue, a general education issue, school-yard bullying, or the need to help your child's social skills or improve behavior. There are no rules as to the type of problem you can write about. Any school problem is worth writing about if it is having a negative impact on your child and you need the school's assistance to resolve it.

### ***Can anyone help me with this situation?***

Yes. There are many people who can help you with letter writing and other tasks relating to your child's special needs. Other parents and professionals have discussed similar issues for many years. You can profit from their experience by talking with them.

There are disability and parent organizations in every part of Arizona that can help. Local chapters of state, regional, and national organizations also can work with you. Many Arizona school districts

now have parent resource centers where information on special education may be obtained. Members of disability organizations are families and professionals who are concerned with issues of a specific disability. They frequently can offer help and support due to their unique understanding of the disability and its symptoms.

Contact a Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialist of the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS), for help in finding a disability specific organization. The PIN Specialists can also help explain your rights and responsibilities related to special education programs. They may be contacted, toll free, by calling the Parent Information Network, at the ADE/ESS, 800-352-4558 or 602-364-4015. You may also visit the PIN Home Page at the ADE Web Site to download information: <http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/>.